



NICS- HCF FOUNDATION FELLOW 2007

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Implementation Project:

Increasing outdoor journeys and the community participation of people with stroke

Many people with stroke are socially isolated and cannot easily get out into the community. These individuals may be isolated because of reduced mobility, an inability to drive and/or communication difficulties caused by their stroke. Evidence-based guidelines from the National Stroke Foundation suggest the provision of occupational therapy home and community visits can double the number of outdoor journeys taken by people with stroke. Therapy sessions can help people to gain confidence crossing roads, negotiate busy shopping centres, and in some cases, return to driving. The aim of this project is to help two community stroke rehabilitation teams in Sydney South West to implement these visits and therapy sessions, as recommended in the national guidelines. These teams, in particular the occupational therapists, will provide a series of visits focussed on transport and community mobility to help people with stroke overcome social isolation and get out into the community.

Implementation Project Progress Report, October 2007:

Since March 2007, Dr McCluskey has worked closely with the two local teams. Following a review of their practice, in-depth interviews and a training workshop, the teams are now escorting people with stroke out into the community more routinely. Typically they walk with the person to a nearby shop, and set weekly goals to increase the distance travelled or number of outings. Sometimes they travel together on buses or trains. People who cannot walk or talk due to their stroke are helped to use special community transport for outings. Typical goals include 'To walk around the block within 2 weeks' or 'Return to driving in 3 months'.

Implementation Project Progress Report, April 2008:

Preliminary audit findings indicate that the number of people with stroke receiving 5 or more sessions targeting community mobility and outings has increased since the implementation of this intervention.



*The National Institute
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Implementation Project Progress Report, October 2008:

The primary aim of this project is to increase the use of evidence by two community stroke rehabilitation teams in Sydney South West. Specifically, the aim is to increase delivery of an underutilised 'outdoor journey' intervention, to more community-dwelling people with stroke. To achieve this aim, occupational therapists and physiotherapists, as well as therapy assistants received education and training, reminders and audit and feedback to help change their practice. Typically therapists walk with the person to a nearby shop, to increase distance walked and confidence. Sometimes they travel together on a bus or train, or help with referral for a driving assessment. The aim is to provide 6 or more targeted sessions per person. Files audits show that nearly 70% of people with stroke received this intervention from one community rehabilitation team (Team A) during 2007-2008, but less than 20% of people with stroke received the intervention from another team (Team B). There is still variation in evidence uptake and practice. Feedback has been provided to both teams following the 2008 audit, with the aim of further increasing delivery of the intervention.

A second aim is to increase the proportion of people with stroke who say 'Yes' when asked if they are getting out of the house as often as they want post-intervention. Preliminary findings show that more than two thirds of people with stroke (64%) report getting out as often as they want after receiving the outdoor journey intervention, compared to one third (32%) at baseline. Interview data from 20 people with stroke provide information about where people go (eg GP surgery, local clubs) and why, as well as barriers encountered (eg overprotective or concerned relatives who want to limit outings, or wide roads with fast moving cars which require fast walking speed). This qualitative information has been provided to treating therapists, and will help guide future intervention.

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Project Mentor:

Mr Mark Shepherd

General Manager, Bankstown Health Service, NSW

NICS Mentor:

Professor Sandy Middleton

Professor of Nursing, Australian Catholic University, NSW

Awards:

Best Allied Health Paper, 3rd Australasian Nursing and Allied Health Stroke Conference, Sydney 2007

Key Presentations:

McCluskey A, Middleton S, Dettrick M, Hirschmanner J, Ho W, Hosking J, Rossiter J, Scott L. Are people with stroke receiving evidence-based rehabilitation? A retrospective audit of occupational therapy practice. 3rd Australasian Nursing and Allied Health Stroke Conference. Sydney; August 2007

McCluskey A. The challenge of implementing evidence. ANZ Spinal Cord Society Annual Scientific Meeting. Sydney; December 2007.